

EPA Brownfields Supplemental Assistance

Niagara Falls, NY

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5105)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. EPA is funding: assessment demonstration pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to assess brownfields sites and to test cleanup and redevelopment models; job training pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to provide training for residents of communities affected by brownfields to facilitate cleanup of brownfields sites and prepare trainees for future employment in the environmental field; and, cleanup revolving loan fund programs (each funded up to \$500,000 over five years) to capitalize loan funds to make loans for the environmental cleanup of brownfields. These pilot programs are intended to provide EPA, states, tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

BACKGROUND

EPA awarded the City of Niagara Falls supplemental assistance for its Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot. Between 1960 and 1990, the city's population declined substantially, as industries left the area and the manufacturing worker population dropped by one-third. This has left idle sites that are a major problem for Niagara Falls. No tracts of undeveloped, uncontaminated land remain for development within the city; therefore, brownfields cleanup is imperative for economic growth.

The Pilot originally targeted properties in the Highland Avenue Redevelopment Area, a state-designated Economic Development Zone (EDZ), for assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment. With the supplemental assistance funds, the Pilot is extending its focus area to the Buffalo Avenue Corridor, also an EDZ. Among the city's most troubled areas, the Buffalo Avenue Corridor, comprising approximately 1,560 acres in the southern section of the city, has a 14.8 percent unemployment rate, compared with the state's 5 percent rate, and 24.5 percent of the households lived below the poverty level in 1990. The shift away from major manufacturing has left a pattern of underutilized land in the Buffalo Avenue Corridor that fails to capitalize on the city's location advantages, economic

PILOT SNAPSHOT



Niagara Falls, New York

Date of Announcement:
March 2000

Amount: \$150,000

Profile: The Pilot targets sites in the Buffalo Avenue Corridor for assessment, cleanup, and development.

Contacts:

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Services
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Regional Brownfields Team
U.S. EPA - Region 2
(212) 637-4314

Visit the EPA Region 2 Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/r02earth/superfnd/brownfld/bfmainpg.htm>

For further information, including specific Pilot contacts, additional Pilot information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

potential, and value. Redevelopment of this area will provide an opportunity for Niagara Falls to revitalize economically disadvantaged areas, provide jobs, augment the city's dwindling tax base, and limit infrastructure maintenance costs.

OBJECTIVES AND PLANNED ACTIVITIES

Niagara Falls's primary objective is to make vacant land and blighted property available for redevelopment and thereby creating jobs for citizens and increase the tax base. The city will use the supplemental assistance to assist this effort by conducting site investigations on at least three properties in the Buffalo Avenue Corridor, the first step in demonstrating the viability of cleanup and redevelopment in the area.

To accomplish these objectives, the Pilot plans to:

- Identify at least three sites for Phase I and Phase II investigations;
- Develop a Buffalo Avenue Corridor Reuse Plan that ties brownfields redevelopment to an overall neighborhood improvement program;
- Conduct outreach and community involvement efforts to involve citizens in the redevelopment process;
- Create an advisory committee comprised of various stakeholders, including community groups, to foster public awareness and input of brownfield redevelopment efforts in the corridor; and
- Investigate environmental assessments at "mothballed" brownfields sites where the present owners did not contribute to the contamination.

The cooperative agreement for this Pilot has not yet been negotiated; therefore, activities described in this fact sheet are subject to change.